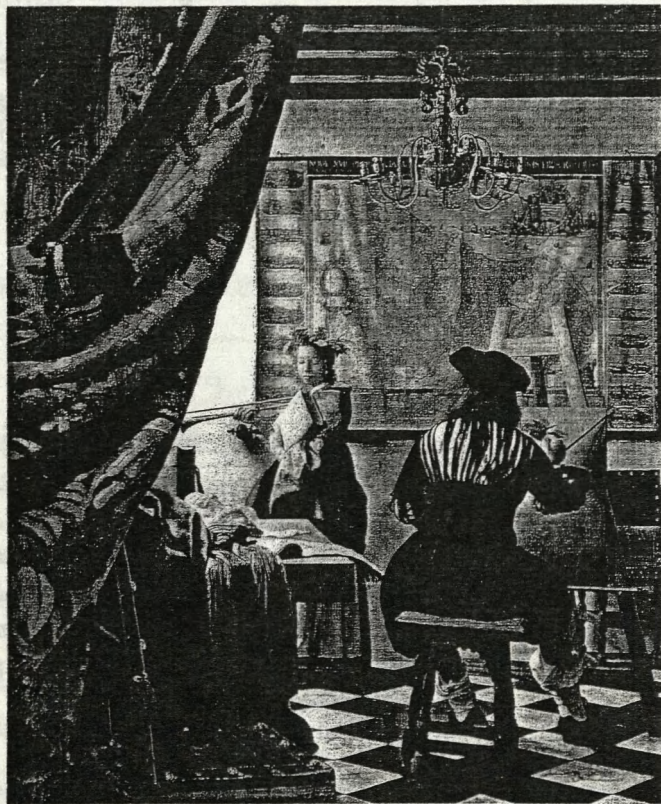

DEMIURGUS

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Verum • Bonum • Pulchrum

What is Demiurgus?

Demiurge (or Demiurgus to St. Augustine and the Latins) originally comes from the Platonic dialogue, *Timaeus*. In this dialogue, Plato describes the Demiurgus, the divine power which produced the harmony of the world out of the discord of chaos. The description of the Demiurgus and his work of fashioning given in this dialogue suggest both the possibility of some knowledge of God apart from special revelation and the limits of that knowledge. This obscured reflection is suggestive of the relation between human wisdom and the wisdom of God. Taken positively, however, the name signifies that passionate desire to create something good; or, to speak in terms of Plato's *Symposium*, that thirst to beget beauty which is the essential craving of every fallen creature for the brilliance from which he came and for which he clumsily strives.

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Comments, Questions, or Objections?

You are invited to respond to the articles contained herein either verbally or in writing. Letters to the editor may, fittingly, be given to an editor. If you are interested in writing an article or helping out in other ways with future editions of *Demiurgus*, talk to one of the editors or look for announcements on the bulletin board in the future.

Cover Illustration: Jan Vermeer, *The Art of Painting*

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Letters to the Editors

To the Editors of *Demiurgus*:

I thought Mr. Waldstein's piece on Robert Schuman in the last issue was remarkably well-written. While all the other pieces I read relied solely upon their subject matter and the reader's goodwill to seize and hold his attention, Mr. Waldstein included personal anecdotes, varied his syntax, and otherwise clearly made an effort to make his writing interesting in its own right.

Miss Rebekah Shapiro

To the Editors of *Demiurgus*:

I read Daniel Shield's article in the Advent 2004 issue of *Demiurgus*, "Noesis," with great interest. His article was a pleasure to read and well expresses the various fallacies regarding the possession of knowledge. Unfortunately, at the end of the article, Mr. Shields throws in a paragraph that seems not only to be erroneous but also totally unconnected to the main point of the article, thus doing his readers a disservice by distracting them from an otherwise excellent and intellectually stimulating discourse.

Mr. Shields quotes 1 Corinthians 13:12-13 and, using this passage as his basis, asserts that men will still have faith in heaven. Mr. Shields may not realize it, but this position is untenable given the very definition of the Apostle. St. Paul defines faith in Hebrews 11:1 when he writes, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Taken together with the passage that Mr. Shields himself quotes, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face..." we see that hope and faith have an object that is unseen as part of their very definition.

If St. Paul is saying we shall have faith in heaven, then he is also saying we shall have hope in heaven, which makes no sense. How can one hope for that which one already possesses? To say this is to deny the very definition of hope. Further biblical evidence concerning faith can be found in 2 Corinthians 5:6-7: "While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, and not by sight." St. Paul here draws up faith and sight as mutually exclusive, and equates faith with being in the body, and sight being without the body. It then becomes clear that faith is a means to the end which we will receive only in the beatific vision in heaven.

We see this concept clearly reiterated in the writings of the Apostle Peter, when in his First Catholic Epistle he writes of faith as having salvation as its goal (end). Now that which is a means of obtaining a goal does not need to remain once the goal has been achieved, thus faith does not remain once the vision of God is attained. St. Peter writes of, "receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:9)

I hope this clarifies any confusion which readers may have after reading Mr. Shield's article. For those readers who wish a philosophical argument as well as a biblical proof, I refer them to St. Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. Thomas discusses the issue in the First Part of the Second Part, Question Sixty-Seven.

Mr. Louis Bolin

In Defense of Popular Sovereignty and Contemporary Democracies

Ryan Burke

Nearly every nation in the world today either recognizes or pays lip service to the idea that in any state political power rests in the people, who delegate it to a government and may revoke it. This principle of popular sovereignty has become associated with the social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, who held that the origin of society is a mutual contract between its citizens. Those who reject the modern theory of a social contract are therefore inclined to reject popular sovereignty as well. This derivation, however, is mistaken. Popular sovereignty has actually been the position of scholastic and Catholic philosophers since the Middle Ages and during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was argued in opposition to the divine right of kings held by certain Protestant writers such as William Barclay. According to St. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), a Jesuit theologian and Doctor of the Church, "In a Commonwealth all men are born naturally free; consequently, the people themselves, immediately and directly, hold the political power so long as they have not transferred this power to some king or ruler;"¹ and again, "A people never so completely transfers its power to a king but that it reserves to itself the right to withdraw it."² Robert Filmer, private theologian to King James I of England, commented on this principle of popular sovereignty in his *Patriarcha*: "This tenet was first hatched in the schools and has been fostered by all succeeding papists."³ St. Thomas Aquinas says twice in his *Summa Theologiae* that "Human dominions and principedoms are by human right, not by divine right."⁴ Pope Leo XIII says in *Immortale Dei* that "The right to rule is not necessarily, however, bound up with any special mode of government."⁵

This present article argues two things, and argues them according to the classical, pre-Hobbes school: first, that the principle of popular sovereignty is true; and second, that the most useful form of government a people can adopt is a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, in which the chief officials are elected.

Political power comes originally from God, because it arises by the nature of man. As Leo XIII argued:

Man's natural instinct moves him to live in civil society, for he cannot, if dwelling apart, provide himself with the necessary requirements of life, nor procure the means of developing his mental and moral faculties. Hence, it is divinely ordained that he should lead his life—be it family or civil—with his fellow men, amongst whom alone his several wants can be adequately supplied. But, as no society can hold together unless some one be over all, directing all to strive earnestly for the common good, every body politic must have a ruling authority, and this authority, no less than society itself, has its source in nature, and has, consequently, God for its author.⁶

Cardinal Bellarmine agrees:

First, political power considered in general, not descending in particular to monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, comes directly from God alone; for this follows of necessity from the nature of man, since that nature comes from Him Who made it;

besides this power derives from the natural law, since it does not depend upon the consent of men; for, willing or unwilling, they must be ruled over by someone, unless they wish the human race to perish, which is against a primary instinct of nature. But natural law is divine law, therefore, government was instituted by divine law, and this seems to be the correct meaning of St. Paul when he says, 'He that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.' (Rom. 16:2)⁷

Thus Hobbes and Locke erred in postulating a "state of nature" prior to society and from which a society was deliberately created, because society is not artificial but natural, as is the political authority inherent in it.

This political power, arising naturally in the society, rests in the people as a whole; and is delegated by them to a government. As Cardinal Bellarmine says:

Note, secondly, that this political power rests, as in its subject, immediately in the whole state, for this power is by Divine law, but Divine law gives this power to no particular man, therefore Divine law gives this power to the collected body. Furthermore, in the absence of positive law, there is no good reason why, in a multitude of equals, one rather than another should dominate. Therefore, power belongs to the collected body.

Note, thirdly, that by the same natural law, this power is delegated by the multitude to one or several, for the state cannot of itself exercise this power, therefore, it is held to delegate it to some individual, or to several, and this authority of rulers considered thus in general is both by natural law and by Divine law, nor could the entire human race assembled together decree the opposite, that is, that there should be neither rulers nor leaders.

Note, fourthly, that individual forms of government in specific instances derive from the law of nations, not from the natural law, for, as is evident, it depends on the consent of the people to decide whether kings, consuls, or other magistrates are to be established in authority over them; and, if there be legitimate cause, the people can change a kingdom into an aristocracy, or an aristocracy into a democracy, and vice versa, as we read was done in Rome.⁸

Thus political authority arises naturally and is therefore by natural law, but any government's specific form is by human law.

It has been argued that political power rests naturally in the most virtuous and able man in the state; but this position confuses the question of who, in prudence, ought to be given political authority, with the question of whence that authority comes. Everyone agrees that rulers ought to be virtuous and able, rather than vicious and foolish. But while the political power ought to be entrusted to the best available men, those men still must be given that power by the multitude; they clearly do not acquire rule as the natural result of acquiring virtue. Furthermore, if natural law mandated the kingship of the most virtuous, any other government would be illegitimate, a position held by no one. Also, God's rule over creation is the best possible rule because God is perfect, and a father's rule over his family is best because he is most suited to rule. It would have to be proven, however, rather than asserted, that in a state there is always a corresponding person who is as superior in virtue and ability to his fellows as God to His creatures, or a father to his children. Until the existence of such a man

is proven, it is unreasonable to claim that only he ought to rule. In fact, if one holds that such a man is not merely most deserving of kingship but by his preeminent virtue is by nature king, the absence of such a king seems to disprove his existence and shows that even if such a man exists, political authority must be given him by the people if he is to rule. A state may find it expedient to install a king, and this king would presumably be chosen because of his virtue and ability. He would not, however, rule by right of his virtue, but rather by right of his selection by the people.

Thus the immediate source of any government's power is the people. Cardinal Bellarmine demonstrates this from Scripture. The words of Samuel to Saul, "Behold, the Lord has anointed you prince over his people Israel. You are the man who must rule the Lord's people,"⁹ Cardinal Bellarmine interprets as a proclamation rather than an actual transfer of power, because Saul does not actually assume the kingship until:

Samuel then made all the tribes of Israel come forward...and the lot fell to Saul son of Kish...Then Samuel said to all the people, "Have you seen the man the Lord has chosen? Of all the people there is none to equal him." And all the people acclaimed him, shouting, "Long live the king!"¹⁰

But because several Israelites refused to acquiesce in the elevation, Samuel in the next chapter and following Saul's victory over the Ammonites instructs: "Come, let us go up to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there...And all the people went to Gilgal and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal."¹¹ Cardinal Bellarmine concludes that:

God, indeed, designated Saul as King and by His Providence arranged that the lot fell to him and again later inclined the will of the people to desire him as King. Therefore, not without the consent of the people nor immediately by God, was Saul made King.¹²

Bellarmino also pronounces the anointing of David a proclamation rather than a transfer of power. David clearly receives grace at his anointing, but he respects and obeys Saul as king as long as Saul lives; nor did he assume the kingship over the tribe of Judah until "the men of Judah came and anointed David king over the house of Judah" following Saul's death.¹³ Immediately after this, David wrote to the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had buried Saul, "Take courage and be men of valor. Saul your lord is dead, but the House of Judah has anointed me to be their king."¹⁴ Not only does David claim authority from the House of Judah, rather than God directly, but he does not rule over all Israel until "The elders of Israel...anointed David king of Israel"¹⁵; Scripture does not consider David king of Israel, but only king of Judah, between these two investitures: "He reigned in Hebron over Judah for seven years and six months; then he reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel and Judah for thirty-seven years."¹⁶ Cardinal Bellarmine again concludes:

God, indeed, made David a king, as He had promised, but by means of the consent of the people. Likewise, God elected Jeroboam king, but He finished the appointment by consent of the people, who rebelled against Rehoboam and constituted Jeroboam king. If, therefore, those whom God designates and makes king, He does not so make without the consent of the people, certainly other rulers chosen in other ways, cannot be said to receive their political power immediately from God.¹⁷

James I of England, in his *Triplici Nodo*, attacked Bellarmine for this interpretation: "He

hath made the people and the subjects of every one of us [i.e. kings] our superiors."¹⁸ Bellarmine responded:

The authority of the king descends, not immediately from God nor by divine right, but only by the law of the nations. This has been, indeed, the common opinion of almost all writers and the general usage and practice of the past. We see, for instance, how kingdoms have been converted into republics and republics into kingdoms, and both rules were regarded as equally just. This could not be so if the authority of kings did not depend on the common consent, but on divine right.¹⁹

The second point concerns the most useful form of government. Of the three forms, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, monarchy has several advantages. It is the simplest and it best provides a unifying power in society. It seems most conducive to peace and order; for while democratic Athens was beset by demagogues and the aristocratic and democratic Roman republic was almost continually divided by factions, the Roman Empire enjoyed prolonged peace and prosperity under Augustus and certain of his successors. However, complete power in the hands of an imperfect man tends to corrupt. As Bellarmine says:

Saul, as a private citizen, was a very good man; made king, he became the worst of men, losing his crown and probably his soul. David was so good before he was elevated to the kingship that he would not inflict the slightest injury upon Saul. After he becomes king, he kills one of his most trustworthy soldiers and pollutes his wife with adultery. Solomon, the wisest of kings at his accession, begins to adore idols.²⁰

Furthermore, even the best kings may be followed by worse: Solomon was succeeded by Rehoboam who foolishly instigated a revolt; and the emperor Marcus Aurelius was succeeded by his vicious son Commodus. Indeed, the continued prosperity of the Roman provinces under such irresponsible tyrants as Caligula, Nero and Commodus suggests that successful government was due to the class of professional officials rather than the emperor personally.

These considerations indicate that monarchy ought to be present in government, but tempered with aristocracy. Aristocracy can prevent the abuses of arbitrary government, as shown by the rebellion of nobles against King John of England and the power of the German nobility which drove Emperor Henry VII to yield to the Church in the matter of episcopal investiture. The monarchy, in turn, would alleviate the dissension among the aristocrats which that system generally produces on its own. Even together, however, the monarchy and aristocracy tend to become decadent and unconcerned with the welfare of the common people, as happened notably in France and Russia. Also, the danger exists that either the monarchy would overwhelm the aristocracy, as the power of the Caesars overwhelmed the Senatorial families in Rome, or the aristocracy would overwhelm the monarchy, as happened in England when King James II was deposed in favor of William of Orange. And the problem of succession still remains: heredity has always placed vicious or weak monarchs in power sooner or later, who either rule poorly or are overthrown in a civil war; the emperor Commodus, Richard II and Henry VI of England, and Louis XVI of France being notorious examples of this. On the other hand, election of the monarch by the nobles prevents the monarchy from exercising any restraint over the aristocracy and negates the advantages of a monarch, as the histories of the Holy Roman Empire and Poland attest.

These considerations suggest that monarchy and aristocracy ought to be further

tempered with democracy by allowing for the popular election of the monarch and the aristocrats. This eliminates the problems of heredity and mitigates the corruption of officials in office. It creates a personal interest in government among the citizens, which mitigates the apathy and declining civic virtue which undercut the Roman empire. Its tendency toward demagoguery can be offset by the other two elements. Most importantly, it allows the people as a whole to exercise their delegation of political power with the most reflection and information, since they would elect leaders at regular times rather than consent to the rule of certain men or certain families indefinitely, without any means short of rebellion of removing tyrants and fools. The advantages of a democratic element are agreed upon by Aristotle and St. Thomas: "All should take some share in the government: for this form of constitution ensures peace among the people, commends itself to all, and is most enduring, as stated in *Politics*, II, 6."²¹ A mixed form preserves the chief advantages of the three types while mitigating their chief faults. Cardinal Bellarmine concludes that such a mixed form is best:

If the supreme head and the minor heads [i.e. aristocrats] acquire office not by hereditary succession but by consent of the people, then democracy, too, has found its representation in this mixed form of government...Such a mixed and more useful government would therefore first; embrace one supreme head and possess all the good qualities attributed to monarchy...second; provide such minor heads as governors of provinces, legislators, and judges who, on the one hand, would be in harmony with the supreme head...and on the other be independent enough to govern over their provinces...third; contain such democratic elements as should reasonable insure the Commonwealth against incompetent rulers and secure the highest degree of popular right, liberty, self-expression, participation, and welfare.²²

St. Thomas comes to the same conclusion:

Accordingly, the best form of government is in a state or a kingdom, where one is given the power to preside over all; while under him are others having governing powers: yet a government of this kind is shared by all, both because all are eligible to govern, and because the rulers are chosen by all. For this is the best form of polity, being partly kingdom, since there is one at the head of all; partly aristocracy, in so far as a number of persons are set in authority; partly democracy, that is government by the people, in so far as the rulers can be chosen from the people, and the people have the right to choose their rulers.²³

Furthermore, Leo XIII in *Longinque Oceani* calls the United States a "well-ordered republic"²⁴

It seems clear that political power arises from the social nature of man and rests in the people and that this has been the position of respected scholastic and Catholic philosophers for centuries, aside from the innovations of Hobbes and Locke. A simple or hereditary monarchy may be legitimately erected, and may be, in certain circumstances, more useful than another form. Even in this case, however, the monarch would derive his authority from the people he ruled and owe his position to their consent. I have given some arguments that the most fitting and useful form of government the people could adopt is a mixture of the three basic forms, whose officials are elected by the people; more could be said on the subject, but the idea of popular consent made explicit by such a system is the foundation of any form of government. Most contemporary democracies, including the United States, are mixed

governments on the model of St. Thomas and Cardinal Bellarmine, who provide an argument for them based on classical principles rather than from the theories of the moderns. While these governments may be attacked on prudential grounds, the truth of the principle of popular sovereignty on which they are based is clear.

Endnotes

¹ *De Clericis*, Ch. VII.

² *Apologia*, Ch. 13.

³ *Patriarcha*, Ch. 1.

⁴ *Summa Theologiae*, II.2 Q. 10 A. 10 and Q. 12 A. 2.

⁵ *Immortale Dei*, Para. 4.

⁶ *Immortale Dei*, Para. 3.

⁷ *De Laicis*, Ch. 6, Note 1.

⁸ *De Laicis*, Ch. 6, Notes 2-4.

⁹ 1 Samuel 10.1.

¹⁰ 1 Samuel 10.17-24.

¹¹ 1 Samuel 11.14-15.

¹² *Recognito Librii Tertii, De Laicis*.

¹³ "Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him where he stood with his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on." 1 Samuel 16.13; 2 Samuel 2.4.

¹⁴ 2 Samuel 2.7.

¹⁵ 2 Samuel 5.3.

¹⁶ 2 Samuel 5.5.

¹⁷ *Recognito Librii Tertii, De Laicis*.

¹⁸ *Triplici Nodo* as quoted in John Clement Rager, *The Political Philosophy of St. Robert Bellarmine*, (Spokane, WA: Apostolate of Our Lady of Siluva, 1995), p. 32.

¹⁹ *Apologia Pro Juramento Fidelitatis*.

²⁰ *De Officio Principis*, Ch. 22.

²¹ *Summa Theologiae*, II.1 Q. 105 A. 1.

²² *De Ecclesiastica Monarchia*, Ch. 3.

²³ *Summa Theologiae*, II.1 Q. 105 A. 1.

²⁴ *Longinque Oceani*, Para. 6.

Clarifying Newcomb's Paradox

Louis Bolin

Newcomb's paradox, so named after its creator William Newcomb, has become a controversial issue in modern times. The paradox, and a discussion of the same, can be found in Martin Gardner's book *Knotted Doughnuts*. The paradox is essentially as follows:

You are given two boxes, A and B. Box A contains one thousand dollars, while box B contains either one million dollars or nothing. You may take either box B or both boxes. At some point before the present, some being (it makes no difference to the paradox what the being is) has predicted your choice and, based on it, has placed money in box B. If the being predicted that you would choose only box B, it placed a million dollars in it; if it predicted that you would choose both boxes, it placed nothing in box B. The experiment has been performed thousands of times previously, and the being has always predicted correctly.

Which box should you choose? Based on previous results, the odds are that if you pick both boxes you will get one thousand dollars whereas if you pick box B you will get a million dollars. On the other hand, however, the being has already placed the money in the boxes; no matter what is in the boxes right now, picking both boxes will always give you a thousand more than taking only box B.

To make it even more obvious, Martin Gardner suggests an added quirk. Suppose one side of the boxes to be clear glass. Whoever is directing the experiment is on the side with the clear glass and is looking in at the money. No matter whether he sees a million dollars in box B or not, would he not think you foolish for not taking both boxes?

This so-called paradox arises from the denial, or the partial non-belief, of part of your own premises. Suppose one takes as a premise that the being is a completely accurate predictor. If this is granted and fully accepted, no paradox arises. One way of thinking of it is as follows: Imagine box B to have a million dollars in it. You are standing in front of the boxes trying to decide whether to pick only box B or both boxes. You decide to take both boxes. You open box B and find nothing in it. Although the time sequence in this example is messed up, your choosing box B does indeed make the money "disappear." Because our premise was that the being is a perfect predictor, your actions are directly linked to whether or not the being places the money in box B. So, although potentially you have the ability to go against the prediction, since the predictor is completely accurate, in actuality your actions correspond with the prediction.

To make this clear, think of the second example with the clear glass sides. Suppose someone is watching you decide which boxes you will choose and at the same time is looking into the boxes and sees that box B is empty. Although he knows that potentially you could choose box B, since he knows the predictor is perfectly accurate, he also knows that you will actually choose both boxes. The distinction here between potentiality and actuality must be clearly understood; otherwise one falls into the error of thinking foreknowledge is incompatible with free will.

Many people, however, will deny the previous explanation for another reason, namely, that the existence of such a predictor is impossible. Interestingly enough, the reason for this denial of the predictor is the acceptance of what Aristotle posits in chapter nine of *De*

Interpretatione, when he says that there is no knowledge of future contingent actions. This is why the predictor in Newcomb's Paradox and Aristotle's proposition are mutually exclusive, because if the predictor is accurate then he must have knowledge of what the one predicted will do. This is why Martin Gardner, in his discussion of the paradox, denies that such a predictor is possible.

One problem with this is that Aristotle's proposition concerning future contingent propositions is incorrect. Unfortunately, that is outside of the scope of this article. For those who wish more information on this, I refer them to Daniel Shield's article on future contingent propositions in the 2004 Spring Issue of *Demiurgus*. A further problem beyond this one, however, arises for those who deny the existence of such a predictor. The predictor does not have to be one hundred percent accurate for the paradox to occur. If the predictor is only seventy five percent accurate, the same paradox arises. This then leads to the absurdity of saying that anyone who attempts to predict what people will pick will always be accurate fifty percent of the time, no more, no less. If he is accurate more than fifty percent of the time the paradox arises. If less, then he merely predicts the opposite of what he has been predicting to raise his correct prediction rate above fifty percent. This, however, is absurd and is contradicted by results of this type of experiment. In a poll taken in the United States, about seven out of ten people chose only box B.

In summary, Newcomb's paradox arises from the acceptance and denial of one and the same principle, namely, that the predictor predicts accurately. Most people further confuse the issue by mixing the potential action and the actual action. If you take your principles and stick to them, and do not mix the potential with the actual, no paradox arises. As is the case with most paradoxes, this one arises from fallacious logic.

For those who are interested in examining the issue in detail, I again refer them to Martin Gardner's book, *Knotted Doughnuts*, which also contains both Martin Gardner's and Robert Nozick's interpretations of the paradox.

Ungodly Heroes: A Preliminary Interpretation of the Book of Judges

Caleb Cohoe

As the hero Don Quixote is being led back from his second attempt at the life of chivalry, in the eponymous novel by Miguel de Cervantes, the canon who escorts him attempts to dissuade the knight of La Mancha from reading tales of chivalry. He points out the ill effects they produce in their readers and then proposes an alternative: "If, following your natural inclinations, you still want to read books of adventure and chivalry, take the Scriptures and read the Book of Judges, and there you will find great truths and deeds as authentic as they are brave."¹ Leaving aside the canon's advice with respect to books of chivalry, is his characterization of the book of Judges accurate? Is the book a tale of heroes of God performing mighty deeds of valour or is the heroism of the judges as questionable as that of Don Quixote?

A close examination of the narrative of the book of Judges in the context of the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua will show that it is not a tale of heroism, but of the failure of the chosen men and people to be united under God.² The Israelites, in failing to subdue Canaan, lose their unity by the divided way in which they take the land and are turned towards idolatry by the persistence of the Canaanites. They come to love those they ought to hate and hate those they ought to love. The consequences of this failure are seen not only in the people but also in their deliverers, the judges. The detailed accounts of the judgeships of Ehud, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson show that they did not see and do what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but instead manifested the turning away from God and tribal divisions they were supposed to solve.

By the end of the book of Joshua, the people of Israel have begun to possess the land of Canaan. Under Joshua's leadership, they have taken multiple cities and, as he grew too old to lead, divided up the entire land into tribal portions so that their conquest may be completed in an orderly manner after his death. The children of Israel now have the principal duty of driving out the Canaanites while following the law and avoiding the pagan gods. Aware of the temptations and difficulties they will face, Joshua gives a last address, reminding them of the wondrous deeds the Lord has performed for Israel and renewing the people's covenant to the Lord. He then sets up a stone as a witness to their choice. (Joshua, chapters 15-19, 23-24)

The book of Judges, however, shows that, once again, the people have not chosen God with their whole heart. Judges can be divided into three parts: an introduction (Judges 1-3.6) main narrative (3.6 to chapter 16) and epilogue and conclusion (chapters 17-21). The introduction describes the events which led to the period of the Judges and lays out the general structure of the history to come while the narrative recounts the deeds of the judges. The epilogue illustrates the consequences of turning away from God by pointing out the depravity of the Israelites towards one another only a generation after Joshua, showing, in the beginning, the final state of the nation.

The book of Judges opens in striking contrast to the book of Joshua. Instead of the entire people working to conquer the land of each tribe, the Israelites ask which tribe should go up against the Canaanites first. They each have their own land now and do not seem too

concerned with the status of their brothers or too eager to fight. This divided action introduces one of the major themes of Judges, the lack of unity in Israel.³ (Judges 1.1-2)

Judah is chosen and, unlike the subsequent tribes, asks for help in the conquest from a neighbouring tribe, Simeon. The action of Judah in taking his cities is impressive until we see him fail to drive out the inhabitants of the plains due to their iron chariots. In the book of Joshua, we saw the people of Joseph offer this technological excuse to Joshua only to be rebuked and told that they must still take possession of the land. If Judah finally fails to properly take possession, his brothers do even worse. All the other tribes fail to drive out the Canaanites in taking possession of their lands and Dan is even driven back by the Amorites. (Judges 1, Joshua 17.16-18)

This failure to annihilate the inhabitants brings an angel of the Lord to speak to the people at Bochim. He reminds them of the covenant they have made and broken and proclaims that since they have forsaken God, the Lord will not help them drive out the remaining inhabitants but will cause them to be a continuing thorn in the side of Israel and allow their gods to ensnare the chosen people. Throughout the rest of the book we will see the truth of the angel's words as Israel turns away from God and is conquered by the peoples of the land. (2.1-5)

After this prologue, the death of Joshua is recounted, introducing the history to come by contrasting Israel's obedience of God under Joshua with the idolatry and enslavement of the subsequent generations. The Lord raises up judges who save Israel from their bondage by their God-given power, but these deliverers fail to permanently lead the people to the Lord. (2.6-23)

The first judge, Othniel, typifies the pattern set out in chapter 2: the people did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, were made captive, cried out to the Lord, and are then delivered by Othniel, who brings rest to the land by prevailing over the oppressing nation. (3.7-11)

In Ehud, the second judge mentioned and the first with an extensive history, we begin to see the flaws of the judges. Ehud, a "left-handed man," is chosen to deliver up tribute to the Moabites from Israel. He uses this as an occasion to deliver Israel from the Moabites, but not through straightforward means. He delivers the tribute then turns back with a "secret message" for Eglon, the king. After Eglon's attendants have been dismissed, Ehud reaches with his left hand for the sword he has hidden on his right thigh and kills the king, delivering his message. Ehud then locks the door behind him and makes his getaway. After he escapes, he rallies the people and leads them against the Midianites. He has delivered Israel, but through a sinister act of treachery. (3.12-30)

The next judge described in detail is Barak. His part of the book opens, however, not with Barak but with the introduction of Deborah, a prophetess and a married woman, who dispenses judgement from underneath a palm tree between Bethel and Ramah, in the centre of Israelite territory. This is the only occasion in the book where anyone, man or woman, who is said to judge seems to do so by rendering judgment between two parties, the first meaning of the word, but the person performing this office is not even properly a judge.⁴ She summons Barak, the man who is to lead Israel, to come to her and tells him to gather his men while she draws Sisera, the Canaanite general, and his army out to battle.

Barak, however, is willing to lead men against the Canaanites only if he is certain that Deborah will be there with him. Deborah reassures him, but prophesies that what he is about to do will not lead to his glory since Sisera will be delivered into the hand of a woman. (4.1-10)

The army of Barak is, indeed, victorious and Sisera does fall by the hand of a woman. When Sisera flees from the battle Jael, a woman of the Kenites (who were at peace with the Canaanites) offers him shelter in her tent, gives him milk to drink, and then, as he sleeps, drives a tent peg into his temple until it touches the ground. The disturbing character of these events is made only more evident by the triumphal song of Deborah and Barak, (note, once again, the order) which begins with the ironic claim that "the leaders took the lead in Israel" and then gives Deborah's praise of herself as "a mother in Israel" bringing plenitude to the land in contrast to the desolation of Israel under the previous judge. The song later praises Jael as "most blessed of women" both because of her hospitality in giving Sisera milk and curds instead of water and because she "shattered and pierced his temple," and concludes with a joyful reflection on the sorrow Sisera's mother must feel as she waits in vain for his chariot to return. (4.11-5.31)

The song of Deborah and Barak also makes explicit for the first time the disunified nature of the actions of the judges. Ephraim, Benjamin, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali are praised for joining in the battle, while Reuben, Dan, Asher, and the residents of Gilead are attacked for their failure to join in the fight, and Judah, Gad, and Simeon are not even mentioned. The limited number of tribes involved suggests that the oppression of Israel and the deliverance given by a judge may be less than universal. Indeed, the fact that Judah and Simeon had driven out the Canaanites, the oppressors who are conquered here, when they took possession of the land suggests that they may not be mentioned simply because this deliverance did not concern them. (4.13-19, 1.3-20)

In Gideon, the next judge, we see the continuing lack of unity in Israel and witness one of the deliverers of Israel from idolatry turn towards idols. Gideon vanquishes the Midianites but only the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali are involved. As he pursues the fleeing armies of Midian, he summons the Ephraimites to help. They do so, but are angry at him until he points out the glory of their success. When Gideon follows the Midianites across the Jordan, however, the towns of Sucoth and Penuel do not acknowledge him as any sort of authority and refuse to help him. Although he exacts retribution on them, this seems to come from his anger, not from a recognition that he should act as their judge. (7.24-8.17)

Gideon's turn towards idolatry comes, ironically, at the same moment as his final triumph over Midian. After completing his defeat of the Midianites, Gideon refuses the kingship, telling the people that "the LORD will rule over you," while at the same time requesting the earrings taken by each man as spoil. With the gold from the Midianites' ornaments Gideon makes an ephod and puts it in his city:

And all Israel whored after it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and to his family. So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel, and they raised their heads no more. And the land had rest forty years in the days of Gideon. (8.27-28)

Gideon drives out the pagans, but he no longer needs them to lead him into idolatry; he can make his own gods. The Israelites are enslaved by the very judge who saved them and the rest in the land can only be illusory. (8.22-28)

In Jephthah, the next judge with an extensive history, the movement towards idolatry and away from a unified Israel is accelerated. Jephthah the Gileadite, the son of a prostitute and the leader of a band of worthless fellows, is recruited by the elders of Gilead to fight against the Ammonites. He accepts, but only on the condition that he become ruler over them after his victory. Jephthah then challenges the king of the Ammonites who is fighting to reclaim his lost land, telling him that the Lord has dispossessed him and saying:

Will you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? And all that the LORD our God has dispossessed before us, we will possess. (11.24)

This passage suggests that Jephthah conceives of the combat as a conflict between two gods who, though they may differ in power, are similar in character and nature. His conception of God as a pagan deity is made clear in his vow to the Lord, made after he had already received the Spirit of the Lord, to sacrifice whatever first comes out from the door of his house to meet him if his campaign against the Ammonites is successful. (11.1-31)

He wins, his daughter comes out to meet him, and she is consequently sacrificed after a brief period of mourning. This sacrifice was then lamented four days each year by the daughters of Israel, thus making customary a commemoration of a pagan sacrifice in contrast to the absence, throughout the entire book, of any record of the observance of Mosaic feasts. Jephthah delivers Israel from the pagan tribe, but he has perverted the relationship of the covenant people with the one God into that of a pagan people and their tribal god. (11.32-40)

Jephthah has also moved even further away from judging all of Israel. He leads only the men of Gilead, which is not even a proper tribe, against the Ammonites. When the men of Ephraim come to him complaining of their exclusion and threatening Jephthah, he counter-accuses them of failing to help him, exults in his solitary triumph, and then gathers the Gileadites to fight their brethren. The men of Gilead are happy to help because the Ephraimites have called them fugitives of Ephraim. They take the fords of the Jordan and, due to a difference of pronunciation which further manifests the lack of unity in Israel, the Gileadites are able to successfully kill 42,000 Ephraimites under the judgement of Jephthah. (12.1-7)

Samson, the last judge mentioned in the book, takes the failings of the judges to their final conclusion. Instead of alienating and expelling the Philistines, he unites himself with them, and his attacks on them arise out of domestic disputes, not a hatred of the pagans and their gods. Indeed, his first recorded action is to demand that his father get him a daughter of the Philistines he has seen in Timnah to be his wife, "for she is right in my eyes." (14.3) He also does not act together with any of the tribes or even any members of his clan or family. When the Philistines raid Judah to get Samson, the men of Judah come to Samson and ask him, "Do you not know that the Philistines are rulers over us? What then is this that you have done to us?" (15.11) Samson, instead of rebuking them for not being ruled by God or even for not following him, merely rebuts that "As they did to me, so have I done to them." He then consents to be bound and delivered to the Philistines, as long as the men of Judah do not attack him themselves. He has no desire to lead Israel against their oppressors; indeed, his desire not to be attacked by Judah may arise simply out of fear that the Lord would not allow Samson's strength to work against his own people. (14.1-16.31)

Samson's attitude towards God is also a further development. He does not move towards idolatry like Gideon or pervert worship of the true God into idolatry like Jephthah, but instead worships himself, doing what is right in his own eyes to the exclusion of any other loyalty. His fights with the Philistines all come from his love of their women and desire for glory. His actions and the amount of time he spends in Philistia suggest that, in the end, the judge and deliverer of Israel has become the same as the Canaanites from whom he is to deliver Israel; God's chosen judge has become the vainglorious, passionate hero of the pagans. In his final act, bringing down the temple of Dagon, he acts out of a pagan desire for vengeance, "that I may be avenged on the Philistines for my two eyes," (16.28) and in destroying the Philistines destroys himself. (14.1-16.31)

The main narrative section of Judges has shown the people and their judges turning away from God through idolatry and tribal hatred. It has done this by portraying the oppression God allowed them to suffer due to their idolatry and the flawed characters of the deliverers which he raised up for them. This narrative, then, manifests the people's evil primarily by looking at their relation to the pagan gods and peoples. It is also a progressive narrative, as the people and, in particular, the judges grow worse and worse.

The epilogue contained in chapters 17 to 21, in contrast, looks at the evils of Israel's idolatry and disunity by looking at the relations among the Israelites themselves. It also shows that the Israelites are not only idolaters, but are turned against the law in as many ways as they have wills. Furthermore, by relating events which happened in the generation after Joshua, (20.28), the epilogue shows the depths of depravity present from the beginning of the time of the Judges.

The epilogue opens with the story of Micah, a son who reveals to his mother that he has stolen her silver after she curses it. In gratitude, she dedicates part of the silver to the Lord to make a carved image with it. This image becomes part of Micah's household shrine at which his son, ordained by Micah himself, serves as priest. The utter opposition of all these actions to the law - at least five of the Ten Commandments are broken, as well as several ceremonial laws - sets the moral conditions for the stories to follow: in every episode every person is doing evil, though often in distinct ways. After all, everyone is doing what is right in his own eyes.

The relations between Micah and the Levite further illustrate the disordered state of the people. In Micah's hiring and ordaining of the Levite to be his private priest, we see the perversion of both the Israelites generally and the Levites. The Levites were to be devoted to the service of God and received hospitably throughout Israel. They were the chosen of the chosen people, the priests in a nation of priests, and were to have God as their inheritance; this Levite, however, is content to have the goodwill of Micah. The satisfaction of Micah, in having obtained a Levite as priest (17.13), shows the perversion of the people's understanding of the law. As long as he has a Levite as a priest, regardless of whether the Levite is of the line of Aaron, whether his household shrine is a lawfully ordained place of worship, or whether he is truly obeying the law in anyway, God "will prosper me." (17.7-13)

Another Levite appears in the final and most disturbing episode of the book of Judges, where we see Israel fully turned against himself. Here a Levite, after retrieving his fugitive concubine from her father's house, stops for the night in Gibeah of Benjamin, after refusing to stop in Jebus, a city of foreigners. The hospitality he receives is neither what he

is due as a Levite or even as the humblest sojourner. Unlike Lot's three visitors, he has to wait in the city square, as no one takes him in for the night, despite his position as a Levite and the fact that he has provisions enough for himself and his host. (19.13-15, 19) When he finally receives an invitation, it is from an old man who is a sojourner like himself and not a Benjaminite. (19.10-21)

As these fellow sojourners were making their hearts merry, the men of the town come, like the men of Sodom, desiring to know the Levite. These men, however, are of his own nation. The old man offers them his virgin daughter and the Levite's concubine, but they refuse. The Levite, however, forces his concubine to go out to them and they violate her. As the Levite leaves the house in the morning, he finds his dead concubine on the doorstep. He cuts her into twelve pieces and sends one to each tribe, prompting them to assemble at Mizpah.

Here the people of Israel resolve to go up against Gibeah. Benjamin, however, refuses to give up the guilty Gibeahites and instead gathers his fighting men. So the rest of Israel decides to fight Benjamin. The same question that was asked about the Canaanites is put to God: "Who shall go up first for us to fight against the people of Benjamin." (20.18) The answer is the same: Judah. This time, however, 22, 000 men of Israel are slaughtered by their brethren. The Benjaminites prevail against the second assault as well, killing 18, 000 more kindred, but the third time the Lord gives them into Israel's hand and 25, 100 men of Benjamin are killed.

A further problem remains after this slaughter: the people of Israel had sworn at Mizpah not to give their daughters in marriage to Benjamin. (21.1) The Israelites first attempt to solve this problem by taking the virgins of Jabesh-Gilead, the only town which was not represented at the Mizpah assembly. They choose 12, 000 of their bravest men to kill "every male and every woman that has lain with a male" and bring back any virgins. (21.10-12) This brutal action does not, however, gather enough women for Benjamin. The second remedy involves choosing another town, Shiloh, and having the Benjaminites abduct their daughters during a festival dance. The men of Benjamin do so and are able to restore their inheritance and towns by treating the other Israelites as if they were a foreign people with whom they were at war. So the book ends with Israel, not united under God as their king, but divided among tribes which treat each other as foreign nations.

Thus we see the full extent of the idolatry, depravity, and disunity belonging to both the people and the judges, springing from their initial failure to obey the command of the Lord to conquer the land and their continual failure to be ordered by God, their true king. The final conclusion of the book applies to both the people and their judges, "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (21.25)

Endnotes

¹ Miguel de Cervantes, *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, Trans. John Rutherford (New York: Penguin, 2003), 1.49, p. 452.

² It should, however, be noted that this essay does not take into consideration any later passages of Scripture which might bear on Judges. In particular, the mention of Barak, Samson, and Jephthah in the gallery of the faithful given in Hebrews 11 and its consequences for interpretation are not considered. It is appropriate to first give a proper interpretation of the book in its

immediate context before seeing what reinterpretation may be necessary in the light of further revelation.

This essay is also not intended to be a complete interpretation and commentary on Judges, but rather an interpretation of Judges in which Israel's lack of unity in expelling the Canaanites is seen as the cause of their idolatry and division and its effects are seen, not only in the people, but also in their deliverers. As such, it considers the evidence appropriate to these theses while not claiming to be an exhaustive treatment of Judges. If seeing the judges as the heroes of God represents a first reading, as seen in the canon's interpretation, this essay gives a second reading while leaving the possibility of a more complete, synthetic reading open.

³ Unless otherwise noted, the translation quoted and referred to is the English Standard Version.

⁴ Although there are places other than Judges in which the Hebrew word for judging seems to be used to describe ruling over or delivering, (cf. 1 Samuel 8.1, 24.15), the primary use in the Old Testament is of the action of a judge in rendering judgment between two parties. W.E. Vine, Mirrill F. Unger, William White, "To Judge," *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996), p. 125-126. See, for example, the first use of the word by Sarah in Genesis. (Genesis 16.6)

Liberally Educated Christian Women in the Legal Profession: An Apology

Rebekah Shapiro

I have often been caught off guard here at Thomas Aquinas College by my colleagues' reactions when I tell them that I intend to have a career in law. There is very frequently marked surprise, and sometimes poorly concealed reproach. It seems to be a common opinion that the law is not an appropriate course of study or professional practice for the liberally educated, Christians, or women. Yet these very things that some people think would exclude me from a legal career are the causes of my interest in the legal profession.

Our education at Thomas Aquinas College is called liberal partly because it fits us to govern ourselves, which is one characteristic of a free man. Part of our education is practical that we might better govern ourselves and others. American legal education is a particular aspect of such practical teaching. In this democracy, it is the study of the laws we have made for ourselves by which we govern ourselves. Legal practice involves arguing and applying these principles. We need lawyers, not just government executives, because, as we all know, sometimes even the best written text can be matter for serious debate.

Those who raise the objection against Christians in the legal profession believe that lawyers are sophists, impious men who "make the weaker argument defeat the stronger," as Socrates was accused of doing.¹ In response I will point out something else we should all know from class, namely, that very often the full force of an argument is not clear until the strongest argument to the contrary is brought to bear upon it. Moreover, in the Bible, we are commanded to, "Open your mouth for the speechless."² Very often, I believe, in their role as an advocate, American lawyers get to do just that. In *The Federalist Papers*, the argument regarding qualifications for American executives and legislators is that intelligence, liberal

education, and goodwill are all that is necessary.³ Judges, however, require such specialized knowledge that only those long schooled in it will be fit.⁴ To me, this means that everyone without a legal education is without a voice in the legal system, and that it is the duty of lawyers to speak for them.

Finally, I have heard the argument made that the law is an adversarial profession, a kind of battle of words, and therefore women are as suited to it as they are to Thermopylae. Without commenting on the major premise, I will say this argument puts forth a limited view of the legal profession. Very little of legal practice actually revolves around courtrooms and the adversarial system. Most of what lawyers do is give advice to their clients to keep them out of courtrooms. This is why they are called "counselors." Since the vast majority of us have long been in the habit of asking our mothers for advice, and this is natural, I do not think anyone should object to women making a living by giving informed advice.

It was with these considerations explicitly in mind that I applied to law school this fall, and it is in the hope that I am correct in my judgments about the legal profession that I plan to go to law school next fall.

Endnotes

¹ Plato, *Apology*, 18b.

² Proverbs 31.8.

³ See particularly *Federalist* 55, 62, and 75.

⁴ See particularly *Federalist* 78.

lemon and lime, part II

Peter Turrentine

like the wind and like the rain
alive after april showers
and storming through burst of water

I see the sun shining in the waters

Lord, I pray Thee, light our way
through black of night and dark of day

untill we cross the river,
we must pay Charon his due
caused by these our shivers
something old and something new

the sun shines o'er the clouds
and amidst the clamoring sounds
springs hope eternal
down alley streets of crack cocaine
'neath the rumble of the elevated train
in verdant pastures scarce to see
come fill thy cup, and drink with me

and let me drink it for thee
thy cup was meant for me

John Paul II and Catholic Philosophy

Daniel Shields

As students at Thomas Aquinas College we attempt to live a Catholic intellectual life. Being specifically Catholic intellectuals, we have an obvious duty to hear what our Pope has to say directly to us. John Paul II's message to intellectuals is contained in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, written in 1998 and explicating the Church's teaching with regard to faith and reason. Every student here clearly ought to read it for himself; nevertheless, I shall attempt to illustrate that part of its teaching which concerns the proper method with which to pursue philosophy. As such, I hope it produces a salutary effect upon the intellectual life on campus.

The most important thing for a specifically Catholic intellectual to consider is the way in which philosophy and theology relate, for what makes us Catholic is our faith. John Paul II sharply distinguishes between the two as modes of knowledge. "Based upon God's testimony and enjoying the supernatural assistance of grace, faith is of an order other than philosophical knowledge which depends upon sense perception and experience and which advances by the light of the intellect alone." (*Fides et Ratio*, 9) Theology, as the pursuit for knowledge founded upon the body of revelation accepted by faith, has different premises and different conclusions than philosophy. Yet both are ordered towards the truth. They are separate, though both entirely legitimate, spheres of action for a Catholic intellectual.

Although philosophy and theology are distinct disciplines, they have a symbiotic relationship. "There is a profound and indissoluble unity between the knowledge of reason and the knowledge of faith. ... Reason and faith cannot be separated without diminishing the capacity of men and women to know themselves, the world, and God in an appropriate way." (16) There are several ways in which faith and theology help reason and philosophy to realize themselves more fully, and vice versa.

One of the most important roles of faith in philosophy is the preservation of the philosopher from skepticism. Philosophy is constantly declaring to diligent seekers all of its limitations, and truth demands ever more and more effort to be reached, "yet for all the toil involved, believers do not surrender. They can continue on their way to truth because they are certain that God has created them 'explorers' (cf. Eccles. 1.13), whose mission is to leave no stone unturned, though the temptation to doubt is always there. Leaning on God, they continue to reach out, always and everywhere, for all that is beautiful, good, and true." (21)

Philosophical enquiry is so difficult that many philosophers conclude that the truth about the world cannot be known. Yet John Paul II addresses this difficulty, clearly with Kant in mind, by commenting on Romans 1.20, "Through the medium of creatures, God stirs in human reason an intuition of his 'power' and 'divinity'. This is to concede to human reason a capacity which seems almost to surpass its natural limitations. Not only is it not restricted to sensory knowledge, from the moment that it can reflect critically upon the data of the senses, but, by discoursing on the data provided by the senses, reason can reach the cause which lies at the origin of all perceptible reality. In philosophical terms, we could say that this important Pauline text affirms the human capacity for metaphysical enquiry." (22)

Faith does not only defend the possibility of philosophical knowledge, it also helps us to understand philosophy's conclusions more deeply. "The results of reasoning may in fact be true, but these results acquire their true meaning only if they are set within the larger horizon of faith." (20) As truth is one, one could not possibly understand the truths of philosophy fully without also understanding the truths of theology, which are most certain and of the deepest and most fundamental matters.

This is one of the reasons why John Paul II makes a "strong and insistent appeal—not, I trust, untimely—that faith and philosophy recover the profound unity which allows them to stand in harmony with their nature without compromising their mutual autonomy. The *parrhesia* of faith must be matched by the boldness of reason." (48)

This brings up the next, very important, point which Catholic philosophers must bear in mind: that philosophy is autonomous from the faith. Reason, as a gift given by God for the attainment of truth, produces philosophical truths naturally. If reason is subjected to faith, if the faith dictates truth to philosophy, reason is not allowed to function according to its nature, to reach the truth by its own efforts, and it ceases to fulfill the function for which God gave it to us. In such a case, man would be impoverished by having only faith as a source of truth and not reason, the complementary source with which God has provided us. For this reason, the Church does not bring her authority, the authority of the faith, into the realm of philosophy.

John Paul II puts this well: "The Church has no philosophy of her own nor does she canonize any one particular philosophy in preference to others. The underlying reason for this reluctance is that, even when it engages theology, philosophy must remain faithful to its own principles and methods. Otherwise there would be no guarantee that it would remain oriented to truth and that it was moving towards truth by way of a process governed by reason. A philosophy which did not proceed in the light of reason according to its own principles and methods would serve little purpose." (49)

The church does not take a stand on philosophical questions, except in cases in which a philosophical position necessarily contradicts the truth of the faith. "In the light of faith, therefore, the Church's Magisterium can and must authoritatively exercise a critical discernment of opinions and philosophies which contradict Christian doctrine." (50) As such, it acts as a corrective, informing philosophy that it made a mistake in its reasoning somewhere along the line (for indeed, reason can never truly contradict the faith, but only appear to). This correction only allows philosophy to be even more true to its principles and methods, leaving it its valid autonomy.

The Church thus condemns certain philosophies, but does not lend its authority to any one. The term 'Catholic philosophy' or 'Christian philosophy' refers then, not to any school or system of philosophy, for "it in no way intends to suggest that there is an official philosophy of the Church....The term seeks rather to indicate a Christian way of philosophizing, a philosophical speculation conceived in dynamic union with faith." However, "it does not therefore refer simply to a philosophy developed by Christian philosophers who have striven in their research not to contradict the faith. The term Christian philosophy includes those important developments of philosophical thinking which would not have happened without the direct or indirect contribution of Christian

faith." (76)

This leads us to the consideration of the most important point, at least for the students at this school: the place which St. Thomas Aquinas occupies in Catholic philosophy. John Paul II is very clear about the matter: "It should be clear in the light of these reflections why the Magisterium has repeatedly acclaimed the merits of Saint Thomas' thought and made him the guide and model for theological studies. This has not been to take a position on properly philosophical questions nor to demand adherence to particular theses. The Magisterium's intention has been to show how Saint Thomas is an authentic model for all who seek the truth. (Thomas germanum sit exemplar illorum qui veritatem perquirunt.) In his thinking, the demands of reason and the power of faith found the most elevated synthesis ever attained by human thought, for he could defend the radical newness introduced by Revelation without ever demeaning the venture proper to reason." (78)

The Church, then, asks of Catholic philosophers only that they imitate Thomas' symbiotic method of uniting philosophy and theology, not that they adhere to his philosophy. Thomas is an authority, then, only in that his philosophy is respected by the Church; one must give his views the attention that they deserve. Yet if one is to reason according to philosophy's own methods and principles, as John Paul II asks of him, he must accept no philosophical tenet of Thomas' out of a fear for his authority. He must accept only that of which his own reason has convicted him. Otherwise, if Thomas held some sort of Church authority in his philosophy, his philosophy would become a theology and the Catholic mind would be impoverished. Quotes from *Aeterni Patris* and other documents are adduced in vain, for John Paul II is clear, and, according to the development of Christian doctrine, the earlier is always understood in terms of the latter.

The Church, with its continued praise of Thomas, does not mean to freeze philosophy as it was in the time of Thomas. "On the contrary, the Magisterium's interventions are intended above all to prompt, promote, and encourage philosophical enquiry. Besides, philosophers are the first to understand the need for self-criticism, the correction of errors, and the extension of the too restricted terms in which their thinking has been framed." Open-mindedness is essential to every philosopher, as "no historical form of philosophy can legitimately claim to embrace the totality of truth, nor to be the complete explanation of the human being, of the world, and of the human being's relationship with God." (51)

Every philosopher, in attempting to understand the world, must form universal propositions, in other words, form systems which seek to capture the essence and operation of things. "Yet often enough in history this has brought with it the temptation to identify one single stream with the whole of philosophy. In such cases, we are clearly dealing with a 'philosophical pride' which seeks to present its own partial and imperfect view as the complete reading of all reality. In effect, every philosophical system, while it should always be respected in its wholeness, without any instrumentalization, must still recognize the primacy of philosophical enquiry, from which it stems and which it ought loyally to serve." (4)

This open-mindedness required of Catholic philosophers, should lead them to study the work of modern philosophers carefully, and to mine the "precious and seminal insights" (48) which their works contain. This open-mindedness ought to lead many students to imitate the "number of Catholic philosophers who, adopting more recent currents of thought and according to a specific method, produced philosophical works of great influence and lasting value." (59)

Nevertheless, the Pope has much criticism for modern philosophy. Many moderns explicitly contradict the faith, and, as they stand, are heretical. Moreover, most moderns misapprehend the true relationship between faith and reason (hence the need for Thomas as an exemplar in this respect). Most importantly, perhaps, is the modern trend of speaking of the end of metaphysics. (55) Since the time of Kant, philosophers have more and more given up on the struggle to know absolute truth concerning the world and God, and have fallen, rather, to speaking of man and the ways in which things appear to him.

Metaphysics, the science not of appearances but of being itself, is thus neglected, and philosophers have ceased to seek for absolute truth.

In light of this, I join with John Paul II in making this appeal:

In the light of faith which finds in Jesus Christ this ultimate meaning, I cannot but encourage philosophers—be they Christian or not—to trust in the power of human reason and not to set themselves goals that are too modest in their philosophizing. The lesson of history in this millennium now drawing to a close shows that this is the path to follow: It is necessary not to abandon the passion for ultimate truth, the eagerness to search for it, or the audacity to forge new paths in the search. It is faith which stirs reason to move beyond all isolation and willingly to run risks so that it may attain whatever is beautiful, good, and true. (56)

Who is Master Kung?

Patrick McNeela

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower- but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is."

-Tennyson

Who was Kung Tzu? He was a pillar of philosophy in ancient China, whose influence is still felt, however slightly, today. Until the advent of Buddhism, Chinese thought was divided between Lao Tzu and Kung Tzu. However, the name probably remains for you unconnected with a personage. The name "Confucius," however, probably triggers the thought of a wizened old man who lived over two thousand years ago and now gives advice through fortune cookies. Kung Tzu, oddly enough, is the same person as Confucius.

Confucius is the name Kung Tzu as it was latinized by missionaries sent to China. This may not seem like something important; after all, the names Juan and John can refer to the same person. However, there is something that does make itself clear in such transliterations: how cultures approach other cultures. Perhaps transliteration is not a problem in the West, which is loosely unified by a shared approach and way of thinking, but when the Orient is approached in this way something important changes. Occident and Orient are separated in ways much more internal and deep-rooted than degrees of longitude. Here it is worthwhile to see how a famous and well regarded eastern thinker, D.T. Suzuki, conceives of this hemispherical dichotomy. Suzuki begins by citing a Haiku by Basho¹, and comparing it with the famous poem of Tennyson cited above:

"When closely inspected,
One notices a nazuna² in bloom
Under the hedge."

Basho at the time must have been strangely impressed by it blooming under a thickly growing hedge, modestly lifting its tender head hardly discernable from the rest. The poet does not at all express his emotions. He makes no allusions whatever to "God and man," nor does he express his desire to understand "What you are root, and all, and all in all." He simply looks at the nazuna, so insignificant and yet so full of heavenly splendor, and goes on absorbed in the contemplation of "the mystery of being," standing in the midst of the light of eternity.

At this point it is important to note the difference between East and West. When Tennyson noticed the flower in a crannied wall he "plucked" it and held it in his hand and went on reflecting about it, pursuing his abstract thought about God and man, about the totality of things and the unfathomability of life. This is characteristic of Western man.

His mind works analytically. The direction of his thinking is toward the externality of objectivity of things. Instead of leaving the flower as it is blooming in the cranny, Tennyson must pluck it out and hold it in his hand ... Compare all this to Basho and we see how differently the Oriental poet handles his experience. Above all, he does not "pluck" the flower he does not mutilate it, he leaves it where he had found it. He does not detach it from the totality of its surroundings, he contemplates it...not only in itself but in the situation as it finds itself- the situation in its broadest and deepest possible sense....

Here is the feeling of reverence, of mystery, of wonderment, which is highly religious. But all this is not expressly given articulation.³

It certainly may be the case that Suzuki is too strict in his characterization of Western man and that Western man is not all that different from Eastern man. There are at least a few examples of a similar mind in the West. For instance, Emerson:

These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God today. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before the leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full blown flower, there is not more; in the leafless root, there is no less. Its nature is satisfied, and it satisfies nature, in all moments alike. There is no time to it. But man postpones and remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.⁴

However, the characterization is valid insofar as it shows how East perceives West. In Suzuki's example the opposition between the spheres is as great as it can get- the difference between an Englishman and a Japanese man. Suzuki's inference seems accurate enough.

Such is the gap between Western and Eastern man. It is at least large enough to be responsible for a noticeable difference in thought and approach, even if the size of the gap is debatable. If our theme of names is evaluated in light of the characterization of Western man a criticism of the Western approach to Eastern concepts arises. Superficially Kung Tzu was renamed "Confucius" because it was hard to pronounce. More profoundly, however, the cause at work seems to be this: Western man has a penchant for "plucking," and so he endeavors to understand Eastern concepts and culture without dropping a Western mindset. We tend to pluck philosophies and religions of the Orient out of their native soil in an attempt to understand them, but in doing so we have not only killed the plant by deracination, but also have prevented ourselves from understanding, since the philosophies and religions are no longer in their proper place amongst their surroundings.

The necessity of a proper approach has, most immediately, a practical consideration. Translation is always difficult, and it seems something is lost in it; for evidence, look only to how we use the words "species" or "logos" or "entelechy." The difference between Eastern language and Western language is great, and so translation is especially difficult. Many words are untranslatable, such as *wu-wei*; roughly meaning non-ado, not doing, or doing just enough.

Grasping the meaning behind such words and terms can only come about by a general understanding of the culture and philosophy; this can only be grasped if one has the appropriate approach. One of the most misunderstood terms of eastern religion is "Nirvana." People generally think of this as nothingness or void, and this may be correct in some instances. However, the term is much broader than that. It is inherently negative, the etymology being the negative prefix *nir*, and the verb *va*, to blow as the wind.⁵ This may lend itself to being perceived as a nihilistic concept and is the source of the confusion about the Buddhist doctrine of *sunyata*, or emptiness. What is signified by this term is conceptually more like the Godhead than any vacancy, extinction or absence.⁶

Although Kung Tzu can be transliterated into Confucius, there is no way to render many terms, such as Bodhisattva.⁷ Thus to even begin a proper understanding of the Orient, one must approach it in a way conducive to comprehension.

One may ask what we have to learn from Kung Tzu. I reply first with Thomas Merton's words, "The Christian scholar is obligated by his sacred vocation to understand and even preserve the heritage of all the great traditions insofar as they contain truths that cannot be neglected and that offer precious insights into Christianity itself."⁸ How Oriental philosophy can help us understand Christianity and the truths which lie therein is a subject for further consideration, perhaps in another article. At least for now the best practical argument may be that in the shrinking world of today it greatly behooves us to know Eastern philosophy and religion, since it is becoming much more ubiquitous here in the West. The theoretical argument is simply this: the Orient composes half of the world and has since the beginning of the world. To lack knowledge of it is to know only half a globe.

Thus, when we approach the East it is imperative that we attempt to understand it in its own right, for, if we do not, we risk losing whatever we would gain from such an inquiry.

Endnotes

¹ An eighteenth century Japanese poet.

² "The nazuna is a small flowering wild plant. Even when flowering it is hardly noticeable, having no special beauty. But when the time comes, it blooms, fulfilling all that is needed of a living being as ordered at the beginning of creation. It comes directly from God as does any other form of being." - D.T. Suzuki.

³ D.T. Suzuki, "Living in the Light of Eternity," *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, p.88-90.

⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance."

⁵ Heinrich Dumoulin, *A History of Zen Buddhism*, p.14.

⁶ D.T. Suzuki, "Meister Eckhart and Buddhism," *Mysticism: Christian and Buddhist*, p.13, 23.

⁷ "Though perfectly enlightened and in possession of the omniscience of a Buddha, the Bodhisattva forgoes final entrance into nirvana in order to aid sentient beings on their path to enlightenment." Dumoulin, p.23. Loving compassion is at the root of the Bodhisattva ideal, and so one is similar to, though not nearly the same as, a saint.

⁸ Thomas Merton, "Classical Chinese Thought," from *Mystics and Zen Masters*.

Vermeer's *The Art of Painting*

Thomas Waldstein

IN one of the smaller rooms of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna there hangs a small painting by Jan Vermeer (1632-1675). It shows an artist sitting with his back toward the viewer painting a girl dressed as Clio, the muse of history. The left of the painting is dominated by a curtain, partly flung back, which gives the viewer the impression of a scene suddenly revealed. The figures have not yet noticed his presence. He holds his breath not wanting to break the spell. What is the spell? It is not the spell of the Rembrandt self-portraits in the last room which the viewer has already spent so much time looking at—those dark mysterious eyes like wells, those furrowed brows. No eyes look at the viewer from this painting. The girl, bathed in beautiful afternoon sunlight from a source obscured by the curtain, is looking

dreamily down. She has lost all self-consciousness, as has the painter, completely absorbed in his task. The girl's brow is completely smooth and unfurrowed—in contrast to the large map of the low-countries behind her, crumpled and creased as though by many wars. One particularly large crease which juts out in the middle, about where the Spanish Netherlands meet the United Netherlands, throws the latter into shadow—the shadow of Protestant error. This idea is emphasized by the chandelier which hangs above the map. It is decorated with the double-headed eagle of the house of Habsburg, but the candle sockets on it are empty. The light of the true faith, always protected and upheld by that venerable house, shines no more over Holland. The viewer can hold his breath no longer. He lets it out in a long sigh. "It's like a picture!" he says. His companion snorts, "It is a picture, you silly ass!"



Jan Vermeer, *The Art of Painting*. (Detail)